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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study was to identify maternal child rearing practices and socioeconomic factors that promote young children's school readiness and achievement. The subjects were 68 children enrolled in kindergarten through third grade at The Florida State University Developmental Research School and their mothers. The mothers completed the Child Rearing Practices Questionnaire (CRPQ). The children were given a school readiness test during entrance to kindergarten, an intelligence test at the end of the first grade, and grade-level achievement tests at the end of each school year. The mother's child rearing practices scores were analyzed with the child's intelligence quotient, school readiness, and achievement scores. Findings indicated that mothers' use of punishment as opposed to reason appeared to be related to the child's readiness for school, reading achievement, and basic skills achievement. Mothers' level of rules of behavior used appeared to have an important effect on the child's readiness for school. Finally, mothers' level of rewarding children appeared to be important in the child's reading achievement. (26 references) (RH)

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Effects of Maternal Child-Rearing Practices on School Readiness and Achievement of Young Children

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study was to identify maternal child-rearing practices and socio-economic factors that promote young children's school readiness and achievement. The subjects were 68 children enrolled in kindergarten through third grade at The Florida State University Developmental Research School and their mothers. The mothers completed the Child-Rearing Practices Questionnaire (CRPQ). The children were given a school readiness test during entrance to kindergarten (Test of Basic Experiences), and intelligence test at the end of the first grade (Test of Academic Aptitude), and grade level achievement tests (the Comprehensive Assessment Program) at the end of each school year. The mother's child-rearing practices scores were analyzed with the child's I.Q., school readiness and achievement scores. The mother's Use of Punishment vs. Reason appeared to be related to the child's readiness for school, reading achievement, and basic skills achievement. The mother's Level of Rules of Behavior Used appeared to be related to the child's language, math and basic skills achievement. A test of importance found that the mother's Use of Punishment vs. Reason and Level of Rules of Behavior Used appeared to have an important effect on the child's readiness for school. The mother's Level of Rewarding Children appeared to be important in the child's reading achievement.

Effects of Maternal CHild-Rearing Practices on School Readiness and Achievement of Young Children

Since the early 1960's, the number of children attending kindergartens and preschools has increased dramatically. Between 1972 and 1986, alone, the total number of 3 to 5 year olds enrolled in such programs increased from 4.23 million to 5.97 million (U.S. Statistical Abstract, 1989). In 1965, only 25 states provided support for public kindergartens and only 60% of all five year olds attended kindergarten. By 1985, all fifty states provided such support and 82% of all five year olds attended kindergarten (Elkind, 1988). In fact, 3.43 million four and five year olds were enrolled in kindergarten; and 2.54 million three and four year olds were enrolled in pre-kindergarten programs. The enrollment in pre-kindergarten programs increased from 11% to 39% of all 3 to 5 year olds between 1965 to 1985. The percentage of all 5 and 6 year olds enrolled in school has also increased over the last fifteen years. In 1970, 89.5% of all 5 and 6 year olds attended school; by 1986, 95.3% were enrolled (U.S. Statistical Abstract, 1989). With the increasing numbers of children in pre-kindergarten and kindergarten programs, it appears that some children may be better prepared for school than are others. It is, therefore, important to ascertain what factors can influence a child's readiness for school and school achievement in order to provide more appropriate early childhood education programs.

Researchers have discovered several factors that are related to a child's readiness for school and later school achievement. These factors include the child's age when entering school (Henry, 1989; Brayman & Piersel, 1987; May & Welch, 1986; Parsons, 1985 and Moore, 1985), the child's self-concept (Mills, 1984), the child's IQ, and the socioeconomic status of the child's family (Mills, 1983 and Coleman, 1975). Another important factor in determining a child's readiness for school is his/her home environment. This is one of the most important factors because the most rapid period of growth in a child's development occurs between the ages of birth and five when many children are or used to be at home with their mothers.

One aspect of the child's home environment is the mother/child relationship. Hess, Holloway, Dickson and Price (1984) found that maternal variables such as the expectations for the child, the teaching style and responsiveness to the child are related to the child's level of readiness for school. Maternal teaching styles during preschool reading sessions affected the child's achievement in language and reading skills according to the study conducted by Lazzari, Bender and Kello (1987). It appears that different teaching styles used by mothers can affect a young child's compliance behaviors (Holden & West, 1989).

Other studies have looked into the effect that married vs. single mothers has on the child's readiness for school and school achievement. In 1986, Milne, Myers, Rosenthal and Ginsberg showed that the mother's employment and marital status can have a negative effect on the child's achievement in reading and math. But the study cautioned that the effect differs for children depending upon their age, race, and family setting.

The single status of the mother usually indicates that the father is absent from the child's home. Researchers have found that father absence negatively affected the children's cognitive development, school achievement, and performance (Guibaldi & Perry, 1985; Goldstein, 1983).

In the current study, the authors have attempted to discover what effects maternal child-rearing practices have on school readiness and achievement. The investigators focused on the following maternal child-rearing practices: Use of Punishment vs. Reason, Promotion of Independence vs. Dependence, the Level of Rules of Behavior Used, the Amount of Spouse Involvement, Level of Rewards Used and the Preference for Older vs. Younger Children, as they relate to young children's academic readiness and achievement. Other factors investigated were the IQ scores of the children, the marital status of the mothers, and the SES variables - mothers' education, occupation, and family income.

FOCUS OF STUDY:

The focus of this study was to determine whether the child-rearing practices of mothers were related to the child's readiness for school and school achievement. The following research questions were asked:

1. Is there a difference in the school readiness and/or achievement scores of young children with single mothers and those with married mothers?
2. Is there a difference in the child-rearing practices of single mothers and mothers with spouses?
3. What is the relative significance of the mother's child-rearing practices and the child's IQ score on the child's readiness for school and school achievement?
4. Is there a relationship between a child's readiness for school and the mother's child-rearing practices; the child's I.Q.; the child's school achievement scores; and other socio-economic variables such as family income, mother's employment, and mother's education?
5. Are the socioeconomic status (SES) variables related to the mother's child-rearing practices; child's school readiness; and child's achievement in school?

METHOD

Fifty-nine mothers of children enrolled in kindergarten through third grade at The Florida State University Developmental Research School were the subjects of this study. Of the 59 mothers, 48 were married and 11 were single. The age range of the married mothers was 26 to 54 with a median of 35; that of the single mothers was 29 to 39 with a median of 34. Forty-two of the mothers were high school graduates, 12 were college graduates, and 4 had post college education. Of the 59 mothers, 27 were employed in "blue collar" jobs (clerical, technical, sales, etc.), 22 in "white collar" jobs (professional or managerial) and 10 were not employed. Fifteen of the mothers had a family income under $19, 999; 18 had a family income between $20,000 and $29,999; and 26 had a family income over $30,000.

The 59 mothers represented 68 children (33 boys, 35 girls) in kindergarten through third grade at The Florida State University Developmental Research School. Of these children, 21 were in kindergarten, 17 in first grade, 16 in second grade, and 14 in third grade. The Test of Basic Experiences (TOBE) scores for all 68 children ranged from 8 to 99 with a median of 72. The Comprehensive Assessment Program (CAP) subtest scores ranged as follows: on reading from 1 to 99 with a median of 54; on language from 1 to 94 with a median of 39; on math from 1 to 94 with a median of 33; and on basic skills from 1 to 96 with a median of

39. The Test of Academic Aptitude scores ranged from 84 to 143 with a median of 108.

INSTRUMENTS USED

1. **The Test of Basic Experiences** (TOBE)) by Moss (1970) was used to measure school readiness. This test was administered by The Florida State University Developmental Research School prior to the child's admission to the kindergarten program. The Test of Basic Experiences was designed to provide information concerning how well the child's experiences and environmental background have prepared him or her for scholastic activities. A high score indicated high academic readiness. The child's score is compared to established reference-group test norms. The reliability of the test (test-retest) has been established with a range of .72 to .82, with a median of .77, when level K is used with kindergarten age children. The content validity of the test has been established (Buros, 1978).

2. **The Comprehensive Assessment Program** (CAP) published by American Testronics was used to measure achievement in reading, language, mathematics and basic skills (Wick and Smith, 1980). Basic skills is a weighted combination of the reading, language and mathematics scales. The publishers have established content validity, context validity and internal reliability. This test was administered to the children at the end of each school year.

3. **The Test of Academic Aptitude** (AA) was developed from items on the California Test of Mental Maturity. It was used to determine the children's IQ scores. The test was given at the end of the first grade. Therefore, no IQ score data was available for the children in kindergarten. It measures general knowledge (vocabulary, analogies, sequences, and memory) that has been shown to predict academic achievement. The instrument's reliability and validity have been established.

4. **The Child-Rearing Practices Questionnaire** (CRPQ) was developed by Dielman and Barton (1973) to measure the differences in parental child-rearing practices. The revised edition, (Barton, 1981) include six child-rearing factors: Use of Punishment vs. Reason, Promotion of Independence vs. Dependence, Level of Rules of Behavior Used, Amount of Spouse Involvement, Level of Rewarding Children, and Preference for Older (5-8 yr.) vs. Younger (0-3 yr.) Children. The authors have established the content validity of the questionnaire (Dielman, Barton, and Cattell, 1973).

A copy of the Child-Rearing Practices Questionnaire was given to 151 Caucasian children (74 boys and 77 girls) enrolled in kindergarten through third grade at The Florida State University Developmental Research School. The mothers were instructed to complete the questionnaire without consulting their spouses and to return only one questionnaire per mother even if she had more than one child enrolled in kindergarten through third grade.

Fifty-nine mothers, representing 68 children, returned the questionnaires. The mothers' scores on the CRPQ were then paired with their children's readiness scores (TOBE), achievement scores (CAP) and IQ scores (AA). The information on the children's readiness, achievement, and IQ scores, as well as socio-economic factors, was furnished by The Florida State University Developmental Research School.

The data were analyzed using Pearson Product-Moment Correlation to determine relationships between pairs of variables. Stepwise regression was used to determine the relative degree of importance of more than two variables. The difference between married and single mothers was determined through the use of an analysis of t - test. An Alpha of $P < .05$ was used to determine the significance of the findings.

RESULTS

Question #1: Is there a difference in the school readiness and/or achievement scores of young children with single mothers and those with married mothers?

Table 1 shows that no significant difference was found between the readiness or achievement scores of children with single mothers and those with married mothers.

Table 1

Achievement Scores of Children with Married or Single Mothers

	Married		Single			
Tests	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	T	P*
TOBE						
Readiness	70.68	24.92	76.14	21.79	.1871	ns
CAP						
Reading	56.70	25.88	50.04	33.68	1.2389	ns
Language	46.92	26.42	35.92	27.52	3.5630	ns
Math	45.93	26.76	46.60	30.78	.0125	ns
Basic Skills	48.74	26.15	41.80	32.08	1.3581	ns

***Significant at P < .05**

Question #2: Is there a difference in the child-rearing practices of single mothers and mothers with spouses?

The analysis of variance was used to determine if there were differences in the child-rearing practices of single and married mothers. As Table 2 shows, there was a difference found in only one of the child-rearing factors, the Amount of Spouse Involvement.

Table 2

Child-Rearing Practices of Single and Married Mothers

Child-Rearing Practices	Married Mean	Married SD	Single Mean	Single SD	F	P*
Use of Punishment vs. Reason	17.79	4.87	16.55	3.67	.6334	ns
Promotion of Independence vs Dependence	25.15	4.23	25.64	3.70	.1254	ns
Level of Rules of Behavior Used	25.96	3.25	26.18	2.93	.0437	ns
Amount of Spouse Involvement	28.42	3.07	19.18	7.72	41.8570	.0000
Level of Rewarding Children	27.94	5.03	29.36	3.64	.7852	ns
Preference For Older vs. Younger Children	15.29	7.01	16.45	6.77	.2490	ns

*Significant at P < .05

Question #3: What is the relative significance of the mother's child-rearing practices and the child's IQ score on the child's readiness for school and school achievement? A stepwise regression was used to determine the degree of importance of the child's IQ score and the mother's child-rearing practices on the child's school readiness. As shown in Table 3, the child's IQ score appeared to be the most important factor in determining

his/her readiness for school. The mother's use of Punishment vs. Reason ranked second followed by the mother's Level of Rules Used. The other child-rearing practices were not important in relation to the child's readiness for school.

Table 3

Stepwise Regression of Children's Achievement, IQ, School Readiness and Their Mothers' Child-Rearing Practices

Dependent	Independent	Step	Direction	F	P*
TOBE					
Readiness	IQ	1	+	10.1888	.0028
	Use of Punishment vs. Reason	2	-	6.8913	.0029
	Level of Rules of Behavior Used	3	+	6.2546	.0016
CAP					
Reading					
	Readiness	1	+	11.6391	.0016
	Level of Rewarding Children	2	-	7.5489	.0018
Language					
	IQ	1	+	18.4822	.0001
	Readiness	2	+	11.9252	.0001
Math					
	IQ	1	+	14.9757	.0004
	Readiness	2	+	9.9924	.0003
Basic Skills					
	IQ	1	+	19.9304	.0001
	Readiness	2	+	16.4030	.0000

*Significant at P < .05

A Stepwise Regression was used to determine if the mothers' Child-Rearing Practices, the children's IQ, and their school readiness had an important effect on the children's school achievement. As shown in Table 3, the children's IQ appeared to have the greatest effect on their academic readiness, language, math, and basic skills. The children's readiness for school appeared to be the next important factor contributing to the children's achievement in reading, language, math, and basic skills. The two child-rearing practices that appeared to have significant effect on children's readiness for school were Use of Punishment vs. Reason, and Level of Rules of Behavior Used. Mothers who used reason rather than punishment in controlling children's behavior and mothers who used more rules and regulations for acceptable behavior tended to have children who scored higher on the school readiness test. The only child-rearing practices that appeared to have a significant effect on the children's reading achievement was the Level of Rewarding Children. The mother's Level of Rewarding Children appeared to be the next most important factor in the child's achievement in reading. Here a negative relation existed, the fewer the number of rewards used by the mother to change or reinforce behaviors, the higher the child's achievement in reading.

Table 4

Correlations between the Child's School Readiness, Child's IQ, Child's School Achievement, Mother's Child-Rearing Practices, and Socio-economic Factors

Variable	Correlation	P*
Readiness		
Reading	.4529	.001
Language	.4825	.001
Math	.3898	.001
Basic Skills	.5600	.001
IQ	.4598	.001
Punishment vs. Reason	-.3631	.003
Family Income	.2416	.035
Reading		
Readiness	.4529	.001
Language	.8358	.001
Math	.3770	.002
Basic Skills	.8896	.001
IQ	.4291	.003
Punishment vs. Reason	-.2904	.014
Family Income	.4242	.001
Language		
Readiness	.4825	.001
Reading	.8358	.001
Math	.3963	.001
Basic Skills	.9057	.001
IQ	.5772	.001
Level of Rules of Behavior	.2760	.018
Family Income	.3464	.004
Math		
Readiness	.3998	.001
Reading	.3770	.002
Language	.3963	.001
Basic Skills	.6557	.001
IQ	.5317	.001
Level of Rules of Behavior	.3374	.004
Family Income	.2925	.012

(table continues)

Variables	Correlation	P*
Basic Skills		
Readiness	.5600	.001
Reading	.8896	.001
Language	.9057	.001
Math	.6557	.001
IQ	.5917	.001
Punishment vs. Reason	-.2326	.039
Level of Rules of Behavior	.2844	.015
Family Income	.4458	.001
IQ		
Readiness	.4598	.001
Reading	.4291	.003
Language	.5772	.001
Math	.5317	.001
Basic Skills	.5917	.001
Spouse Involvement	.3303	.019
Family Income	.3708	.009

***Significant at P < .05**

Question #4: Is there a relationship between the child's readiness for school and the child's school achievement; his/her IQ scores; the mother's child-rearing practices; and socio-economic variables?

Table 4 shows that there was a positive relationship between the child's readiness for school and the child's achievement in reading, language, math, and basic skills; and the child's IQ score. Also, there was a positive relationship between the child's readiness for school and his/her family income. The only child-rearing practice that was related to the child's readiness for school was the mother's Use of Punishment vs. Reason. The

more the mother used reason over punishment, the higher the child's readiness score.

Table 4 further shows that a child's achievement in reading was related to his/her readiness for school, and achievement in language, math and basic skills, and to his/her IQ score. The only child-rearing factor that was related to the child's achievement in reading was the Use of Punishment vs. Reason. The more the mother used reason over punishment, the higher the child scored on reading achievement. The family income appeared to be positively related to the child's achievement in reading.

A child's achievement in language was positively related to the child's readiness for school, his/her achievement in reading, math and basic skills, and the child's IQ score. The mother's Level of Rules of Behavior Used was positively related to the child's achievement in language. The more rules the mother used in guiding her child's behavior, the higher the child scored on the language achievement test. Also, the higher the family income, the higher the child's achievement on the language test.

The child's achievement in math was positively related to the child's readiness for school, achievement in reading, language and basic skills, and to his/her IQ score. The mother's Level of Rules of Behavior Used was the only child-rearing practices that was related to the child's achievement in math. The higher the Level of Rules of Behavior Used, the higher the

child scored on math test. The higher the income, the higher was the child's score in math.

The child's achievement score on the basic skills was positively related to the child's readiness for school, his/her achievement in reading, language and math, and to the child's achievement on the basic skills. The mother's Use of Punishment vs. Reason was negatively related, that is, the more the mother used reason over punishment, the higher the child scored on basic skills. The mother's Level of Rules of Behavior Used was positively related; the higher the Level of Rules of Behavior used, the higher the child scored on the basic skills test.

The child's IQ score was related to the child's readiness for school, and his/her achievement in reading, language, math and basic skills. The Amount of Spouse Involvement was related to the child's IQ score. The results showed that the higher the child's IQ score the higher the Amount of Spouse Involvement. The children from families with higher incomes appeared to score higher on the IQ test than children from lower income families.

Question #5: Are the socio-economic (SES) variables related to the mother's child-rearing practices? Are the SES variables related to the child's readiness for school and the child's school achievement?

Table 5 shows the correlations that were found between the socio-economic (SES) variables and the mothers' child-rearing practices; children's readiness for school; and school achievement. The results showed that the education of the mother was related to her occupation and to the family income. The only child-rearing practice that was related to the education of the mother was the Amount of Spouse Involvement; that is, the higher the mother's education, the more the father was involved in the child-rearing process.

Table 5

Correlations Between Socio-Economic Variables, Mothers' Child-Rearing Practices and Children's School Readiness and Achievement

Variables	Correlation	P*
Mother's Education		
Mother's Occupation	.3199	.007
Family Income	.2305	.041
Spouse Involvement	.2453	.032
Mother's Occupation		
Mother's Education	.3199	.007
Independence vs. Dependence	-.2951	.012
Level of Rules of Behavior	-.2622	.022
Family Income		
Mother's Education	.2305	.041
Spouse Involvement	.3561	.003
Level of Rewarding Children	-.2593	.024
Readiness	.2416	.035
Reading	.4242	.001
Language	.3464	.004
Math	.2925	.012
Basic Skills	.4458	.001
IQ	.3708	.009

***Significant at P < .05ppa**

The mother's occupation was negatively related to the Promotion of Independence vs. Dependence and to the Level of Rules of Behavior Used. The non-employed mothers tended to score lower than the employed mothers on Promotion of Independence vs. Dependence and Level of Rules of Behavior Used.

The family income appeared to be related to the mother's education, the child's readiness score, and the child's achievement in reading, language, math and basic skills. Child-rearing practices that were also related to family income were Amount of Spouse Involvement and the Level of Rewarding Children. The higher the family income, the more the father was involved in the child-rearing practices. The higher the family income, the fewer rewards the mother used in controlling her child's behaviors.

SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

Based on the results of this study, the following points are drawn: (1) There was no difference in the school readiness and school achievement scores of children who come from homes with single or married mothers. That is, the marital status of the mother does not appear to affect the school readiness or school achievement levels of children. Whether there would be any short term effects on readiness or achievement of children while the mother is going through a change in marital status was not addressed by this study and would be an area for further study.

(2) There was no difference in the child-rearing practices of single mothers and married mothers except in the area of spouse involvement. It was not surprising to find that there is a difference in the level of spouse involvement in as much as there was no spouse present in the home of a single mother.

(3) The child's IQ appeared to have the greatest impact on the child's school readiness and achievement. The child's readiness for school appeared to be the next factor affecting the child's school achievement in reading, language, math, and basic skills.

The mother's child rearing practices that appeared to have important effects on school readiness were Use of Reason vs. Punishment and Levels of Rules of Behavior Used. A child who scored high on the readiness test tended to come from a home in which the mother used reason rather than punishment in controlling behaviors. This relationship may indicate that mothers who use reason in guiding behaviors may be helping her children to develop higher levels of cognitive functioning. This ability to reason appears to transfer to other areas of the child's learning and enhances the child's ability to succeed in school.

The Level of Rules of Behavior Used also affected a child's readiness for school. Children tended to be more ready for school when their mothers used a wider range of rules and regulations for acceptable behaviors. This supports the notion

that a child can function more easily in an environment in which he/she knows what is expected of him/her. In addition, the ability to use and follow rules is essential in the learning process. A child who has had experience in applying and following rules will be able to transfer such experience to different learning situations.

(4) The mother's child rearing practices that appeared to have an impact on the child's school achievement was Level of Rewarding Children. The fewer rewards that were used to reinforce or change behavior, the higher the child scored on reading achievement. This appears to suggest that when fewer external rewards are used, the child develops an intrinsic reward system. The child learns to find his/her own reward in what he/she is doing rather than in some external source. This is particularly important in reading because reading is frequently a self-directed activity that requires the child to find rewards in the enjoyment of reading itself.

The mother's child-rearing practices that appeared to be related to the child's school achievement were Punishment vs. Reason and Levels of Rules of Behavior Used. As indicated before when mothers use reason in guiding their children's behavior, it helps the child to observe, analyze and draw conclusions from given facts. All these skills are necessary in any learning situation.

Also the number of rules the mothers used to guide the child's behavior seemed to have a positive effect on the child's achievement in language, math, and basic skills. Learning requires the ability to follow and apply rules.

(5) The Amount of Spouse Involvement was found to be related to the child's IQ. Fathers who are involved in the child-rearing practices of their children appeared to have a positive effect on the child's IQ. Mills (1983) indicated that the father's participation in the child-rearing process promotes a greater quality of parent-child interaction, as well as, a greater variety of stimulating activities which affect the child's readiness for school.

(6) Family income was the only socio-economic factor that was related to a child's readiness for school and school achievement. This finding contradicts an earlier study (Mills, 1983) in which family income was not found to be related to a child's readiness for school.

Other socio-economic factors were related to some of the child-rearing practices. The mother's education was related to both the Amount of Spouse Involvement and to her occupation. These relationships might be explained by the fact that when the mother is employed she would need extra help in rearing the children and, therefore, the spouse would of necessity be more involved. The mother's occupation was found to be related to the mother's Promotion of Independence vs. Dependence. Employed

mothers promoted more independent behavior from their children and use more rules in guiding children's behavior than non-employed mothers. These findings seem to suggest that when mothers are employed, they tend to place more responsibility on their children, thus promoting independence.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The results of this study suggest the following recommendations:

1. That teachers and school administrators move toward a method of school discipline which rejects the use of corporal punishment and embraces the use of reason. When parents and teachers use more reason with a child when trying to control behaviors, they enhance the child's readiness for school and his/her later school achievement.
2. Parents and teachers provide children reasonable rules of behavior in order to provide a framework in which the child can develop and learn.
3. Teachers and parents can help the child develop an intrinsic reward structure by limiting the amount of external reinforcements used to control or change behaviors.

4. Fathers get more involved in the child-rearing practices as this appears to have a positive effect on a child's IQ.
5. Parent education programs focus on adequate and proper child-rearing practices, particularly on the use of reason, the level of reasonable rules used and the level of rewards used. Such programs, it is expected, would benefit children by enhancing their readiness for school and later school achievement.

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